

Review of Basic Vocabulary Terms

Name: _____

Date: _____

Many of the elements of the novel draw on terms you may have already learned in your study of the short story. Before moving on to a more detailed study of the novel, make sure you understand the important terms defined below:

Characterization: The methods a writer uses to communicate information about characters to readers.

When the author *tells* the reader directly about a character, it is called **direct characterization**.

When the author *shows* the character in action and lets readers draw their own conclusions, it is called **indirect characterization**.

◦ **Climax:** The moment when the action comes to its highest point of dramatic conflict. Most often, the climax occurs *before* the actual ending of the story.

Complication: Any obstacle that increases the tension of the story conflict.

◦ **Conflict:** The central source of tension and drama in the story. Conflict is also sometimes referred to as the **story problem**.

Dialogue: The actual words that characters speak. Authors use dialogue skillfully in the story to portray character and to dramatize conflict.

Dramatic irony: A technique that increases suspense by letting readers know more about the dramatic situation than the characters know.

Exposition: Background material about the characters, setting, and dramatic situation with which the author introduces the essentials of the story to the reader.

◦ **Falling action:** The part of the story, following the climax and leading to the resolution, in which there is a sharp decline in dramatic tension.

◦ **Foreshadowing:** A writing technique that gives readers clues about events that will happen later in the story.

Imagery: The use of selected details to describe one thing in terms of another. This comparison helps suggest additional meanings and feelings.

◦ **Irony:** A particular tone created when the speaker intends a meaning that is opposite to the words he or she says.

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